

Trust and Hairspray by lapits (nadagio)

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Summary:

A mysterious package arrives addressed to Steve Harrington. Its contents say something ominous about the secrecy of Steve's hair care regimen.

Trust and Hairspray

Author's Note:

This is a weird mix of crack humor and drama with a dash of fluffy Harringrove. Idek.

Billy was at Steve's house when the door rang, and so Billy was present when Steve signed for the package and brought it inside. It was addressed to Steve but if Steve had known what he would find when he opened the box he would have waited until Billy was gone. But he didn't. So he opened the box.

Together, Steve and Billy stared at the dozen spray cans of Fabergé Organics hairspray – with the Farrah Fawcett label – in shock.

“How quickly do you go through this shit?” Billy asked, picking up a can and looking it over with a smirk. “I couldn't use this much product in a *year* and I've got more hair than you do.”

“I...” Steve said, still very confused. “Didn't order this? I don't know where it came from.”

He checked the return address on the box, but it listed a department store in Chicago. It didn't tell him who *bought* it. Or why it was delivered to *Steve*.

“Then who the hell did?” Billy asked, frowning. He rifled through the box as if searching for a clue. But there was nothing but hairspray and an invoice of contents. “You swore me to *secrecy*, Steve, and I take that shit seriously. Who else knows?”

“Only Dustin,” Steve said. “I've never told anybody but you and Dustin. And he couldn't have afforded this, he can barely scrounge together enough quarters for the arcade!”

Steve pulled at his hair, anxious questions of “who” and “how” running through his head.

“Steve,” Billy said. He put a hand on the back of Steve's neck and reeled him in to press their foreheads together. He spoke softly,

gently. “Steve. Dustin spilled the beans. Somebody *knows*.

“No,” Steve whispered, horrified. He imagined the ramifications if the secret spread, if everybody *knew*. Oh god, he’d never live it down. Who was it? How had this happened?

Billy scowled, and there was a look in his eye that Steve hadn’t seen in months. But Steve was too occupied with his own thoughts to recognize it. He should have said something then but he didn’t, because he didn’t know yet what would happen.

That was the moment that sealed Dustin’s fate.

Steve had mostly moved past the trauma of having his secret hair regimen becoming not-a-secret by the time Sunday came around. No one had confronted him about it, so maybe disaster and social shame weren’t imminent after all. Steve didn’t like to think about. Until something came of it, he wasn’t going to think about it.

Sunday was Dungeons & Dragons night for the Party and Steve was in the car with Billy when he went to drop Max off at the Wheeler’s that afternoon. Steve went to follow her inside briefly just to say hello to the kids, and when Billy came too without whining about it – Steve should have known. But Billy was always so good at concealing his intentions until the last minute, and Steve liked to think his boyfriend was growing more fond of the shiteheads. He should have known.

The moment they descended into the basement, Billy made a beeline to Dustin. He hauled the kid up by his shirt and crowded him against a wall. It was a disconcerting flashback to That Night for everyone involved. For a second there was only shocked silence, and then... chaos.

“BILLY!” Steve shouted, rushing to tear his boyfriend away from the *middle schooler half his size*. The other kids were mobilizing, shouting and reaching for random objects to use defensively. “What the hell!”

“Who did you tell!?” Billy said, loud and aggressive and right in Dustin’s face. The poor kid looked fucking terrified. “Steve said tell no one and you told *someone!* WHO!?”

“What - I don’t - !” Dustin stuttered. In the background the other kids were screaming variations of “stop!” and “let him go!”

“Billy! NO!” Steve said, reaching around to grip Billy’s torso and haul him off. But Steve was unsuccessful as always in overcoming Billy physically. “Billy!”

“Tell me!” Billy said.

That’s when an invisible force *pushed* Billy away from Dustin. *Hard*. Billy flew at least five feet, and Steve went right along with him to land in a heap across the room. Fucking ow.

The Party cheered.

“Thanks, Jane,” Steve said once he could draw air into his lungs again. He untangled his limbs from Billy’s and watched warily as Billy struggled to sit up and failed. He snarled and fought but Jane was stronger and she had him pinned.

Jane looked down at him, hand outstretched. Her nose bled. She said, “Friends don’t hurt friends.”

“Yeah?” Billy sneered. “And I thought *friends* knew how to keep a secret!”

“It’s fucking *hairspray!*” Steve said. He sat on Billy’s chest to keep him down and give Jane a break. “It doesn’t matter!”

“It was your *trust!* And he broke it!” Billy made a half-assed attempt to push Steve off him, but mostly he gave up the physical fight in favor of the verbal.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, man!” Dustin said, hiding behind Jane now like the rest of the boys. Max stood beside Jane and glared at Billy like she wished she was holding Steve’s nail bat so she could take a swing. Thank god she didn’t have Steve’s bat.

“You’re crazy!” Lucas piped in.

“He’s not the only one to break my trust,” Steve told him, furious. “I thought I could trust *you*, Billy. What are you thinking, pulling this

shit?”

That got through to him. Billy froze, stricken.

“Steve,” he said quietly, and didn’t say another word.

Steve looked him in the eyes – saw the pain and regret – and wanted to forgive him immediately, but he couldn’t. Billy had attacked *Dustin*.

“Is someone going to explain what’s going on?” Mike asked.

“Is Billy possessed by the Mind Flayer?” Dustin said. “Holy shit. Is the gate back open!?”

“No way, he’s just an asshole,” Lucas said. “I *knew* he couldn’t have changed.”

“Dustin, did you tell anyone about the hairspray?” Steve said, because apparently this was going to be a *thing* now so he had to know.

“Hairspray!?” Mike said.

“Steve! No!” Dustin said. “You know I’d never -”

“He’s *lying!*” Billy snarled, surging upward and Steve shoved him right back down with a glare.

“Friends don’t lie,” Jane said.

“Dustin said he didn’t tell,” Steve told him. “So he *didn’t*. There must be another explanation. You can’t go around starting shit like this, Billy! Especially not with the kids!”

“Why is he going berserk over *hairspray!*?” Mike said. Dustin told him to “shut up, man, they’re having a moment!”

“He’s lying,” Billy repeated, quieter. Stubborn.

“If you won’t trust him, trust *me*,” Steve said. “Trust me when I say you need to let. This. *Go.*”

Billy didn't say anything, but he got that furious pout on his face that meant he'd given in. Steve didn't push him to say it out loud. Would never force him to apologize – it wouldn't be sincere and would only remind Billy of things best forgotten.

Steve stood up and offered Billy a hand, helping him to his feet. The boys in the Party took a collective step back.

"That's it?" Lucas said. "All that crazy and it's over just like that?"

"Maybe Steve has special powers – he can calm a berserker's rage!"

"Dustin, that's ridiculous. Nothing can pacify a berserker when he's -"

"Sorry to interrupt your game with this shit," Steve said, shoving down his anger and disappointment with a sigh. "Dustin, you okay?"

"Hah! Obviously!" Dustin said with an awkward chuckle. "Takes a lot more than that to phase *me*."

"Sure, like we didn't all see you were about to piss your pants -"

"*Lucas -!*"

"Glad to hear it," Steve said. "We'll just... go. Have fun, guys."

Steve guided a sullen Billy toward the stairs, giving the Party a wide berth as they crossed the room. But just as they passed the huddled group of teenagers, Billy stopped and looked at Dustin. Everyone in the room held their breath as the tension ratcheted higher.

But all Billy did was mumble "sorry" and continue on up the stairs, leaving everyone gaping in his wake.

"I... have never seen him apologize that quickly without -" Max cut herself off.

"Are you sure he isn't possessed?" Dustin said, wide-eyed. "Seriously, man, this whole thing was *weird*..."

Jane was already turning back to the game and Mike followed her quickly, Will right after him. Lucas crossed his arms and said "That

was a seriously crap apology, Steve. He sucks at apologizing.”

Steve shrugged, still amazed Billy had apologized at *all*. “No arguments here. But one step at a time, yeah?”

Lucas scoffed and returned to the table with Max, who told Steve she’d see him later. Dustin lingered. He leaned in to whisper,

“So does this mean that someone found out about... *you-know-what?*”

Steve nodded and winced. “Yeah. Somehow.”

Dustin put a hand on his shoulder, expression somber. “Steve. I’m so sorry.”

“Not your fault, kid.” Steve ruffled Dustin’s hair and snickered when the brat ducked away with a protesting squeal. “Still picking you up after AV Club this week, right?”

“Yeah, man. But today we’ve got this sick quest going where we -”

“Uh huh, sounds great,” Steve said, already bounding up the stairs to escape the nerd talk. “See you then!”

Steve exited the Wheeler house with trepidation, not sure of the state he’d find his boyfriend in. Anger was likely. But it turned out he didn’t have to worry too much. When Steve slid into the passenger seat, Billy’s mood – as Steve assessed it – would have been best described as “hangdog.”

Taking pity on him, Steve reached across the gearbox to hold Billy’s hand. Billy avoided meeting his eyes.

“It’s... sweet, I guess,” Steve said. “That you wanted to- defend me? Maybe? But I don’t need it, Billy, and I don’t ever want to see *that* happen again. Will you talk to me next time? *Before* you start... shoving people around and yelling because you think they hurt or offended me. Please.”

“Yeah, okay,” Billy said quietly. He squeezed Steve’s hand. “You... know I’d never lie to you, right?”

"I know."

"You can trust me," Billy said, his voice entreating.

"I know I can trust you with *me*," Steve said, slow and careful. "But it's gonna take some time before I totally trust you with everybody *else*. For you to value their safety and happiness like you do mine. Does that make sense?"

"...Yeah."

"I love you," Steve assured him. They could talk about it more later. For now, that was what Billy needed to hear.

Billy lifted Steve's hand to his lips and placed a soft, lingering kiss on the knuckles. It was as close as Billy would get to saying it back, for now. And that was okay.

There was plenty of time for them to work things out. Trust went both ways and it came hard to Billy. That he trusted Steve with any of his "softer" feelings was a small miracle. Today was a step back for them, but they were getting better at it every day.

"Let's get going before Mrs. Wheeler comes out and tries to seduce you with cookies again," Steve said. Billy smiled (as Steve knew he would) and started the car.

Later that week, Steve picked Dustin up from school after AV Club as planned. It meant less driving for Mrs. Henderson and Dustin would get home in time for dinner. As usual, Mrs. Henderson invited Steve to stay and Steve accepted. Good food and more time with the Hendersons – absolutely. He was happy to stick around and avoid an awkward meal with his parents.

It was sometime between Dustin rambling about the Party's latest exploits and dessert that Mrs. Henderson said,

"Oh, Steve! Did you get that order from Marshall Field's? They told me it was going to arrive last week."

Steve stared at her for a moment, baffled. Marshall Field's, the

department store in Chicago? It clicked.

“You bought me hairspray?” Steve said. He exchanged a wide-eyed stare with Dustin. “How... how did you know that’s what I use?”

Mrs. Henderson laughed. “Dusty absolutely *insisted* I find him the Farrah Fawcett spray after he started spending time with you, and you thought I wouldn’t know you recommended it? Steve honey, I know that hair doesn’t happen without some work! Don’t you like it?”

“I love it!” Steve assured her, ignoring Dustin’s quiet mutterings of “holy shit” over and over again. “There’s just... so much of it, Mrs. Henderson. You really didn’t need to go to the trouble.”

“But I *did!* Sweetie, did you hear they’ve discontinued the line? Fabergé was bought out by another company and it’s getting so hard to find! Someday soon you won’t be able to find it at all. I wanted to help you stock up, as thanks for helping so much with Dusty lately.”

Steve gasped. Against his will, his eyes watered. “No more Farrah Fawcett spray?” he whispered.

Mrs. Henderson shook her head sadly. “It’s gone,” she said sympathetically.

Steve was speechless. He had twelve and a half cans left. And then... it would be gone. Forever. What was he going to *do*? Would he ever find a hairspray as good as Farrah Fawcett’s?

“Oh, sweetie!”

Mrs. Henderson stood and circled the table to pull Steve into a hug. Steve fell into her arms, heartbroken.

“Ho-ly shit,” Dustin said quietly.

So that was the mystery, solved. But Steve would rather the whole state of Indiana know his secret if it meant he wouldn’t someday soon have to live without his beloved Farrah Fawcett hairspray.

Author's Note:

(The Farrah Fawcett spray really was discontinued the year the show took place. Poor Steve.)

Thank you flippyspoon for the prompt challenge!
You can check it out over [on Tumblr](#).

My prompt was "fluff," "mysterious package or camera," "Wheeler House," and "Mrs. Henderson."
This turned out only sort of fluffy? Oh well. Hope you enjoyed. :)